

## Dwyfor Area Committee

**Area: Library Service**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Ioan Thomas**

**Contact Officer: Hywel James, Principal Librarian.**

**Contact Number: 01286 679 463**

**Department: Economy and Community**

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**Item Title:** The Future of Gwynedd Library Service

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**Purpose:**

1. Report on the findings of the Library Service Review.
  2. Raise awareness of the Public Consultation on the Future of the Library Service in Gwynedd.
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### **1. Review of the Library Service (2013)**

1.1 The Economy and Community Department, under the direction of an Advisory Panel of elected members, has completed a review of the Library Service in Gwynedd. The review was completed during 2012-13.

1.2 The main findings of this review include:-

- There is a general trend of increased use in the service, with a decrease in use in some specific libraries;
- That Gwynedd's performance against the 'National Libraries Standards' is higher than average;
- There is high level of satisfaction with the service amongst library users;
- There service is important to local residents, but actual visits with libraries are below the national average;
- There is a high level of awareness of the core service provided by Libraries, but more needs to be done to promote elements of the provision, specifically around the digital provision available;
- There need to be a clear strategic direction for the Service going into the future which focuses on four priority areas, which are Digital, Health and Well-being, Reading and Information;
- The current model of delivery is not sustainable for the future.

1.3 On completing the Review the Advisory Panel concluded that the Library Service should :-

- Adopt a new strategic direction;
  - Move towards a delivery model that's based on a combination of Main Libraries and Community Access points.
  - Undertake an Options Appraisal for identifying the best Options to achieve the new delivery model.
- 1.4 The Library Service has drafted a new strategy for the future, and undertaken an options appraisal to identify different options for the new delivery model which would support the delivery of the strategy.
- 1.5 The Library Service had now started a consultation process to gather views on the new strategic direction and delivery model – “Gwynedd Library Service Consultation – More Than Books”.

## 2 Gwynedd Library Service Consultation – More than Books, 2015.

- 2.2 The Council is facing a financially challenging period, and is striving to find different ways of delivering services to the county's residents. The Library Service is a statutory obligation, however, it must continue to deliver and meet the statutory regulations within the decreasing resources available.
- 2.3 It is expected for the Library Service to deliver its service with a reduction of at least 25% in its budget by 2017-18; and also a further cut to its budget as a result to any decisions taken on Council services during the same period.
- 2.4 In this challenging context the Library Service is gathering the opinion of residents, users, communities and partners on the future of the service.
- 2.5 The service has completed an initial equalities impact assessment on the direction suggested in “More than Books”. This in turn has identified some groups of people and communities that might be affected by the changes suggested. We are now in the process of having specific consultation sessions with these groups.
- 2.6 In addition to this we are also holding Drop-In sessions in all of the communities that currently have a Library Building, to gather the opinion of the general users and residents; this is also supported by an on-line and paper questionnaire available via the Council's website.
- 2.7 The public consultation will close on July the 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 2.8 Access to all of the consultation documents is available from the council's website ( <https://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/en/Council/Have-your-say/Consultation-on-the-Library-Service.aspx> ), and from any Library (building and Mobile).

## 3 Next Steps

The findings from the public consultation will be used to complete the Equalities Impact Assessment, and also used to draw up recommendations to be presented to the Cabinet for a decision. It is anticipated that a report will be presented to the Cabinet by the end of 2015.